

**The Bureau of Land Management
Boise District Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting
February 22, 2017
BLM Boise District Office
3948 Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho 83705**

MEETING MINUTES

Boise District RAC Members Present

Tina Reay, Karen Steenhof, Art Talsma, Donna Bennett, Michael Gibson, Joe Merrick and Rochelle Oxarango.

BLM Advisory/Staff Present

Lara Douglas, Tanya Thrift, Brian Thrift, Amanda Hoffman, Lance Okeson, Brent Ralston, Jon Beck, and Mike Williamson.

Introductions – Lara Douglas and Karen Steenhof

- Meeting started several minutes late due to the snowstorm.
- Welcomed everybody and went around the room for introductions. We are short of a quorum due to travel problems caused by the snowstorm.
- Motion to approve the agenda passed.
- The RAC held off on approving the last meeting's minutes. Karen wanted everybody to review.
- Staff updates: Peter Ditton is now acting State Director, Jeff Jackson is leaving for the Dept. of Defense, Lance Okeson will be Acting Field Manager for Owyhee Field Office, Andy Delmas is on Detail. Megan Conry (sp?) is Acting Associate SD for 4 months. No nominee for National Director. Anytime the RAC has a question for staff, feel free to call and ask.
- Discussed whose terms are ending on the RAC next year. March 18, 2018 is the end of term for Bennett, Steenhof, Talsma, Merrick, McAdams and Gray. Merrick, Bennett, Talsma, and Steenhof have re-applied.
- Lunch logistics discussed.

Fuel break and fuels reduction Programmatic EIS update – Jon Beck, BLM Idaho State Office Planning and Environmental Coordinator

- Outlined the two programmatic EIS efforts and the reasoning behind why the BLM is taking these actions: because of the ecological and economic needs. There are two related goals for these projects: reducing damage caused by fire and restoring sagebrush steppe.
- We are currently in the scoping period, comments can be submitted individually or as a RAC.
- The Habitat Restoration PEIS addresses issues of Wildfire, invasive plant species, and conifer encroachment.
- Goals of fuel breaks are to provide staging areas for firefighters, reduce flame lengths and the fire's rate of speed, and to protect life and property
- Main concerns about fuel breaks so far are maintenance (weeds), access, fragmentation, non-natives and movement barriers
- Watched BLM Twin Falls video of a fuels break in action along a highway south of Bruneau (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_M7sclAXns). Questions were asked as to the age of the

Bruneau Field Office update – Tanya Thrift, Bruneau Field Manager

- BECO Grazing Permit Renewal (Battle Creek, East Castle Creek & Owens allotments) – We've completed the scoping period. We expect the environmental analysis to be out this spring, with a decision sometime this summer. Includes looking into an outdoor education site with the help of Rimrock High School near Perjue Canyon. Donna reminded everyone that the gate to Perjue canyon is right on the road. Tanya said they are considering what to do about that. Joe asked that maps for this project be brought to the next County Commissioners coordination meeting. Art asked about small reservoirs drying up and how are ranchers addressing this? Tanya stated that some issues are resolved, some are not.
- Bruneau FO Botanist Holly Hovis continues to work with Rimrock High School's agriculture instructor on the school's native garden.
- Travel Management Planning
 - Canyonlands East is the first of the plans and we are most of the way through it. We are finishing up the environmental analysis and going through an internal review process.
 - Several RAC members asked about having accurate maps after the decision is made. Tanya responded that maps, kiosks and other means would be used to communicate to the public.

Fire and Fuels update – Ben Sitz, Boise District Acting Fuels Program Coordinator

2017 fire report:

- 250,000 acres of sage-grouse habitat burned in Idaho
- 2 million acres of sage-grouse habitat burned in the US
- Only 31,000 acres TOTAL burned in Boise District
- Bruneau Owyhee Sage Grouse Habitat (BOSH) Project – The Final Environmental Impact Statement was released for a 30 day public availability period on February 9. It is possible to start implementing soon after a Record of Decision is signed.
- Tri-State Fuel Breaks Project
 - The Notice of Intent went out in December 6, 2016
 - We are still drafting Chapters 1 & 2 and doing internal analysis
 - All RAC comments from subcommittee have been incorporated
 - There are 4 alternatives (fire efficiency, wildlife, economic/social, and no action)
 - Karen asked if RAC supported map with specific routes. Ben said the RAC did not vote on specific routes.
 - The RAC asked for BLM to re-send the map showing BLM's identification of routes based on criteria that the RAC subcommittee developed.
 - We're hoping for a draft in September, with a signature in June 2019.
 - There was some discussion to have a subcommittee formed just for addressing fuel breaks. It was decided to continue discussing fuel breaks as a full committee for now.
- Soda Fuel Breaks & Targeted Grazing – Five Operators are allowed to be out starting March 1 through June 30. Some likely won't start until April. All proposed pastures have operators, with the exception of Jump Creek. Poison Creek pasture may not happen due to conflicts with OHV recreation. We are putting gravel on roads and conducting mowing and noxious weed treatments in the fuel break area.

Lunch Break

Four Rivers Field Office Resource Management Plan update – Brent Ralston, Four Rivers Field Manager

- Brent discussed the task he asked RAC members to consider at our previous meeting: to see if scoping topics received from the original 2008 comment period were still pertinent and identify others that may not have been identified.
- Rick Raymondi was not able to make the meeting, but his comments will be forwarded.
- Art expressed concern with the increasing population in the Treasure Valley and how many more recreational shooters there are. Believes it is a fire concern and would list firecracker use statewide as a big part of that also. Michael, Joe and Donna agreed that shooting and firecrackers are safety issues.
- Art also identified climate change and what a decrease in snowpack would mean for water supplied for fish and wildlife. Also mentioned bighorn sheep in Adams County, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and access to public lands.
- The only Travel Management Planning happening within the Four Rivers Field office is within the Birds of Prey NCA.

Other Topics

- Discussed the election for Chair and Vice-chair, but have decided to hold off as we do not have a quorum.
- We will proceed with the next meeting scheduled for April 4 and hope the RAC selections are made by then. If not, we will still meet, but we will not have any votes or conduct any other official business.

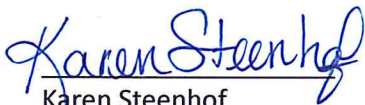
Next RAC Meeting – April 4, 2018

Action items

The following items from the meeting were requested by the RAC Chair and/or RAC members:

1. Distribute Tri-State recommendations from RAC subcommittee, including maps.
2. Information about contracted long-term horse care.

Minutes certified by:



Karen Steenhof
BDO RAC Chairman

4/4/18
Date



Lara Douglas
Manager, BDO

4/4/18
Date